

rules were interpreted rather too strictly and the result was that applications were refused in several deserving cases.

Reply.—Permission is necessary under the Royal Proclamation and cannot be dispensed with. Information is called for on certain matters which are deemed to be absolutely necessary in the interests of public peace and the rules apply not only to Christian churches, but also to Hindu temples and Mussalman mosques. I do not know of another country where there is so much of religious toleration as Travancore, and if a preliminary enquiry is conducted before formal sanction is given for the erection of a place of public worship, it is not because the permission applied for should not be granted, but with a view to avoid all possibilities of riots or friction in the future. As regards the delay complained of, steps will be taken to minimise it as much as possible.

189. Desirability of Government lending money for house-building.

Mr. G. Sankaranarayana Iyer (Shencottah) said that in congested areas fires frequently occurred and the Government now granted reeds and bamboos free of cost to the sufferers in some cases. As this temporary relief did not completely protect house-owners from future danger, the member suggested that money might be lent to them at low interest to tile their buildings.

Reply.—The Towns Conservancy and Improvement Regulation contains a provision for affording relief in certain directions. Beyond this it is not possible for Government to go and grant the prayer now made. In cases of wholesale conflagration due to accident or even mishap, specific recommendations made by Peishkars as to the grant of timber, bamboo, &c., will be considered. Similar relief will be afforded in cases of submergence by floods also.

190. Establishment of a National Bank with the aid of Government.

Mr. S. Swamy Iyengar of Trivandrum (Nominated) brought forward this subject.

Reply.—This is not practicable. But if banks are started by private agencies, the question of what aid could be given by Government will be considered.

191. Giving all Government contracts to Natives,

Mr. T. Marthandan Tampi, B. A., (Trivandrum) said that it stood to reason that the wealth of a country should be conserved within that country itself. All Government contracts on a large scale in Travancore were being given away to outsiders in preference to the sons of the soil. If no capitalists came forward from among the natives, contracts, he represented, could at least be given in shares to a number of enterprising men who had vested interests in the State. Government declared that they would not prefer one class or section to another, but he claimed that it was necessary to give some protection to the native against the commercial inroads of the outsider. Protection was accepted as a guiding principle in several countries including America, and he saw no reason why the statesmen of this country should not follow that example. As it was, it was painful to note that this State was open to the exploitation of any outsider for the mere asking and the liberality shown by Government to aliens knew no bounds. He prayed that as far as possible all contracts, especially in the Public Works Department, might hereafter be given only to the natives of the land.

Reply.—No hard and fast rule can be laid down. Each case will be dealt with on its own merits. All contracts are now open to free competition, but if for particular works particular persons are chosen on account of low tender or other considerations, it cannot be helped. No preference will, however, be given to one over another, except on the score of ability to carry out works.

192. Passing of rules to regulate the conduct of chitties.

Mr. G. Idichandy, B. A., Bar-at-Law (Mavelikara) stated that chitty transactions and consequent litigation were on the increase in Travancore and unless some rules were passed for regulating the conduct of chitties, subscribers were sure to come to grief owing to the want of solvency and business capacity of the foremen with whom they might come in contact. It would be desirable, he said, to make it penal for any foreman to start a chitty transaction in which his aggregate liability was greater than the market value of his landed property. It should further be made compulsory for him to execute a security bond to the subscribers for the money he drew in the same manner as the subscribers were obliged to do to him at present. The foreman should also be bound to show to the subscribers the security